MR. CARY'S AND MR. ANDREWS'

SERMONS

OCCASIONED BY LEAVING THE

OLD MEETING-HOUSE,

AND THE

DEDICATION OF THE *NEW ONE.*

TO THE

First Church and Society

IN NEWBURYPORT,

THE FOLLOWING

DISCOURSES,

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

ARE WITH ALL DUE RESPECT INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR

AFFECTIONATE PASTORS,

THOMAS CARY,
JOHN ANDREWS.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED TO THE

FIRST RELIGIOUS SOCIETY

IN NEWBURYPORT,

September 27, 1801:

BEING THE LAST

LORD's-DAY

OF THEIR ASSEMBLING IN THE

Old Meeting-House.

4447

BY THOMAS CARY, A. M.

SENIOR PASTOR.

FROM THE PRESS OF ALLEN & STICKNEY.

NEWBURYPORT.—1801.

A

SERMON.

PSALM, lxiii. 2.

TO SEE THY POWER AND THY GLORY, SO AS I HAVE SEEN THEE IN THE SANCTUARY.

A FRAME of ſpirit ſincerely gracious ſometimes appears in the moſt advantageous light in the moſt melancholy ſcenes, and a good man oftentimes ſhines brighteſt when ſurrounded with the greateſt troubles. The conduct of David, the author of this pſalm verifies the obſervation.

He was called to experience many heavy afflictions, but in the ſoreſt trials he was not unmindful of his God, his affection remained, and he expreſſed it in the warmeſt devotional language. Notwithſtanding God cauſed him to feel the rod, yet he ſuppoſed him infinitely worthy his adoration and eſteem. He had the greateſt love to his houſe and ordinances, and no trouble ſeems to affect him more, than the being deprived

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the privilege of approach unto God, to behold his glory in his ſanctuary. Much of this ſpirit we diſcover in the compoſition before us.

It was undoubtedly wrote, either when he was baniſhed from his country, and Saul was attempting to deſtroy him; or when, by the unnatural rebellion of his ſon, he was obliged to flee from the capital of his kingdom.

How warmly! How pathetically, does he declare his longing deſire after his Maker! "O God, thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee; my ſoul thirſteth for thee, my fleſh longeth for thee in a dry and thirſty land, where no water is." He adds in our text—"To ſee thy power and thy glory, ſo as I have ſeen thee in the ſanctuary." "To be reſtored again to worſhip thee before the ark of thy preſence, which is the token of thy power and majeſty reſiding among us; and there to enjoy thee, as I have heretofore done, when I had the liberty to go into thy ſanctuary."*

The words very fully expreſs, how deſirable is an attendance upon God in the public methods of his worſhip; and how highly becoming and pleaſing it is to

ſerious

* Bp. Patrick's commentary.

ſerious and devout minds, at certain ſeaſons, to reflect upon the advantages they have enjoyed in his houſe, and how they have improved them. And theſe are the truths I ſhall now endeavor to conſider.

God is preſent every where, and none can ſhun his immenſity. We appear before him at all times, and in all places. He is not confined to temples, "the workmanſhip of men's hands." Yet there is a *ſpecial preſenting* ourſelves; and this muſt be, by an attendance upon him in his houſe, as in the ſervices of it he is *particularly exhibited:* as being ſeated on a throne of majeſty and grace, as ready to receive the united homage of his creatures, willing to hear their importunate petitions, to offer his ſacred truths, manifeſt his perfections, and afford his bleſſing.

We find under the Jewiſh diſpenſation, the Almighty dwelt in the tabernacle and temple, by extraordinary manifeſtations of his glory. By the ſhining light, which was called the Shecinah, and which appeared upon the ark of the covenant, he ſignified his *peculiar preſence.* This is *now* ceaſed, but we may ſuppoſe, the places devoted to his ſervice, and improved for the purpoſes of religion in the uſe of his ordinances and inſtitutions, en-

joy his preſence in a manner ſomewhat *appropriate*. Accordingly we read, "God loves the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob."* For there he delights to diſcloſe himſelf to his people, to exerciſe his loving kindneſs; and of conſequence his ſervants appear before, and attend upon him in a ſenſe that is *particular*.

If God hath appointed means of religion, where can we more rationally hope and expect to find him, than in an united attendance upon them in the place "where he hath recorded his name?"

We then attend upon the Supreme Being when we unite to adore the divine attributes, to ſupplicate the bleſſings of his providence and grace, to render the tribute of praiſe and thankſgiving, for either general or particular mercies we receive, and which bring us under different obligations. And we alſo attend upon him when we hearken to what he hath declared concerning ſin and our duty, concerning his grace, which hath brought ſalvation by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and that he hath through him, made known the things relating to our preſent and future happineſs. And we perform this duty, when we improve thoſe injunctions of the *poſitive* and *ritual* kind, which are deſigned by the great head of

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* Pſalm lxxxvii. 2.

the church to ſhew forth the mercy of God in a ſenſible way—a method adapted to our *ſenſes*, and alſo to point out our character as ſinners, and what we are to do. Men certainly attend upon God in the moſt *peculiar* ſenſe, when they improve the ſacred exerciſes of religion: They put themſelves more immediately under his inſpection, while they addreſs the divine majeſty, and hear his voice in the temple, as manifeſted in his word and by his ordinances.

Now ſuch an attendance, to a mind properly diſpoſed is truly deſirable; and it will appear ſo, if we conſider it as a *reaſonable duty*, and an *eminent privilege*.

FIRST. It is a reaſonable duty.

THE dependance of creatures upon their Creator, their obligations to him, and his right to their ſervices as he is their Lord, are clear and plain. At the *firſt* view, they ſtrike the mind and carry conviction along with them.

MANKIND are gathered and formed into ſocieties. Now if the worſhip of God is a duty, it ſeems to be evident that an attendance upon him in a *ſocial* way muſt

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be ſo. If then the mind is ſuitably affected, if it rightly judges, attentively conſiders the arguments of religion, hath a ſenſe of its obligations to ſubmit to God, and own him in the manner he hath directed, and eſteems it to be juſt and proper, it cannot be eaſy without an approach to him. A ſoul convinced of duty will be fond of diſcharging it, He who ſees God to be his ſovereign, that is impreſſed with a ſenſe of his dominion, and the claim he hath to the ſubjection of his creatures, muſt with all readineſs, give teſtimonies of his humble and ſubmiſſive regards to him in the ways of his appointment.

THOSE who have no proper conceptions of duty will not be led to religious acts, but public worſhip conſidered in the light of duty, approving itſelf to the underſtanding, and urged by the voice of conſcience, will very powerfully attract.

SECONDLY. It is alſo an eminent priviledge.

MANKIND having by ſin made themſelves miſerable, God is pleaſed in his great goodneſs to afford means to recover them from their unhappy circumſtances, reinſtate them in his favor, and make them bleſſed through

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his "beloved ſon." Now theſe are wiſely adapted to theſe important purpoſes; and they are ſo, in a way ſuited to man as a *reaſonable* creature, and as inured to *ſenſe*.

If God hath eſtabliſhed means, it is at *leaſt* to be preſumed, men may uſe them with *hope*, and that they will not be altogether uſeleſs and unſucceſsful with all. If we do not ſuppoſe ſome connexion between means and end, between the means of grace and the good of thoſe who improve them, we cannot well conceive why they ſhould be inſtituted, nor reconcile their inſtitution and the call upon men to make uſe of them, with the wiſdom and goodneſs of the divine author; nor yet perhaps can we ſay in what ſenſe they are means, or whether there is any ſenſe included in the word.

But then, that means may produce an happy effect, they muſt be attended upon with a preparation of heart. Men muſt carefully and ſtrenuouſly endeavor, that their minds may be taken off, as much as poſſible from the cares and vanities, the ſtriking things of this life and world. They muſt ſeriouſly conſider their ſituation as ſinners—that they need the ſupreme good, and think upon God as the only ſource of happineſs; muſt earneſtly

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ſupplicate him to form the mind to the beſt and moſt advantageous poſture, to receive the benefit which the ordinances of the goſpel are calculated to promote.

It is alſo to be remembered, that all means depend upon the divine bleſſing for their *efficacy*. The huſbandman ſows, but though the earth is adapted to produce, yet there muſt be the ſmiles of heaven, the favorable concourſe of providence in the ſhining of the ſun, and falling of the rain, in order to their being an harveſt: even ſo, the means of grace and ſalvation, while they are waited upon by thoſe for whoſe advantage they are deſigned, muſt be accompanied with the influences of the holy Spirit to make them "a ſavor of life unto life." This ſeems to be plainly pointed out by St. Paul, when writing to the Corinthians, he ſtiles them "God's huſbandry." "I have planted, Apolles watered, but God gave the increaſe. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increaſe."*

Now this attendance upon God is an eminent priviledge--it conduces to the pleaſure and delight of the ſoul--and is highly profitable.

1. It

* 1 Cor. iii, 6, 7.

1. It conduces to the *pleaſure* and *delight* of the ſoul.

Man is a compound being, conſiſting of body and ſpirit; the former is ſatisfied by the gratification of groſs and ſenſual appetites, the latter by objects of a more refined nature, and by the exerciſes of religion. Hence ſaith the Pſalmiſt in our context, "Becauſe thy loving kindneſs is better than life; my lips ſhall praiſe thee. Thus will I bleſs thee while I live, I will lift up my hands in thy name. My ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs, and my mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful lips." And in another place; "They ſhall be abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of thine houſe, and thou ſhalt make them drink of the river of thy pleaſures. For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light ſhall we ſee light."*

In prayer to God, the mind (being in a ſuitable frame) will rejoice and triumph in the celebration of the divine perfections. It muſt be affected, when it offers the language of penitence; It muſt be elevated when it enumerates the various bleſſings of providence it is made the partaker of; and with compoſure commits its concerns of a temporal kind, whether proſperous or adverſe,

* Pſalm xxxvi. 8, 9.

verſe, into the hands of a gracious and faithful God. But O how muſt it feel, when it ſeeks relief from the fountain of mercy, and hath hope and expectation of the bleſſings of divine goodneſs through the Savior—that it is intereſted in him, ſhall be a ſharer with him in eternal glory—a joint heir with Chriſt to the heavenly inheritance! A ſoul thus brought *near* to God in devotion, is amply paid—fully ſatisfied.

ARE men made acquainted with heavenly and divine truths, by the diſpenſation of the word, or the adminiſtration of ordinances; thoſe truths which are of the greateſt importance, which manifeſt the harmony of the divine attributes in the redemption and ſalvation of ſinners, the inſeparable connection between grace and holineſs, and the glorious realities of the future ſtate, theſe muſt move the heart, muſt give it exalted hopes and the moſt ſolid joys. The ſoul being animated by them, looks beyond the preſent exiſtence into the world of ſpirits.

TRUTH is adapted to the mind, to pleaſe the underſtanding. Politicians will ſpend their time with the greateſt chearfulneſs, in conſulting about, and forming different conſtitutions of government; pointing out

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what is abſurd in the one, what important in the other, and which the moſt eligible. Philoſophers have roſe up early, and ſate up late to ſtudy mathematical problems; and when they have been able to demonſtrate them, the pleaſure they have enjoyed, hath in their imagination, more than compenſated for all the pains they have taken. But theſe "are loſs, when compared with the excellency of divine knowledge." The mind enlightened with *that*, made acquainted with the great things connected with its immortal felicity, will afford infinitely greater ſatisfaction.

While God is addreſſed, as being *near* his creatures, while he reveals himſelf to them in his exalted character, while truth ſhines upon them from his word and ſacraments, and their ſouls are filled with divine light in the temple below, this attendance may be conſidered as bearing ſome *faint* reſemblance to that above, where "the ſpirits of the juſt made perfect," ſhall be completely bleſſed, in the preſence of their God and Savior, and ſhall "rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory."

It hath I think been well obſerved, "that it is promiſed to thoſe who ſerve the Lord, that he will bring them into his holy mountain, and make them *joyful* in

his *houſe* of *prayer*." The Pſalmiſt therefore declares, "that a day in God's courts is better to him than a thouſand elſewhere;"* and all his wiſhes ſeem to be ſummed up in *this*, "that he may dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the days of his life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and enquire in his holy temple."† In our ſecret retirements we may hope to have communion with God, and we may ſo in our families; but it is in the ſanctuary, in the ſolemn aſſembly, we may expect the cleareſt manifeſtations of him, the brighteſt views of his glory, the ſweeteſt taſtes of his love, and the moſt ſenſible experience of his power; all which are deſigned for our comfort and ſupport, while we are paſſing through this world, and when we are parting from it, cloſing our eyes upon every thing here.

2. It is an eminent priviledge, as it is *profitable*, as well as *delightful*.

"Blessed is the man (ſaith wiſdom) that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the poſts of my doors; for whoſo findeth me findeth life, and ſhall obtain favor of the Lord."‡ Thoſe that be planted in the houſe of the Lord, ſhall flouriſh in the courts of

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* Pſalm lxxxiv. 10. † xxvii. 4. ‡ Proverbs viii. 34, 35.

our God, "they ſhall bring forth fruit in old age, they ſhall be fat and flouriſhing."* This attendance is happily ſubſervient to the renewal and ſanctification of the heart. With God is the ſpirit of grace, and for this he will be enquired after. As by importunate ſupplication in ſecret he is ſometimes found, ſo no doubt he is in prayer in his houſe; this by a divine influence bringing the ſoul near to God, leads the heart to honor and ſanctify him.

THE word preached, tends to the awakening and conviction of ſinners, and in the hands of the bleſſed ſpirit may be a mean of their converſion. There is undoubtedly ſuch a thing as communion with God—as having the heart go forth to the fountain of all good, and alſo to have him communicate his light and influence to men. Now this, in his uſual method, is by the way of ordinances. By theſe, the "ſervants of the moſt high," find themſelves to be nouriſhed and ſtrengthened. The work of grace is carried on in them, and they are made meet for the heavenly inheritance. "Beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the ſame image from glory to glory, even as by the ſpirit of the Lord.†

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* Pſalm xcii. 13, 14. † 2 Cor. iii. 18.

And as this attendance hath an influence upon the *temper*, ſo it hath upon the *converſation*. In the ſame proportion as "the hidden man of the heart" is affected, will be the walk—the general behavior. If the ſoul is ſanctified by the impreſſion of divine truth, the conduct muſt be agreeable to the will of God. He that reaps ſpiritual advantage by the means of grace will diſcover it in the life, in an uniform and ſteady practice of thoſe various virtues incumbent on him, and will have his converſation in the world in righteouſneſs and ſobriety.

We are then naturally led to obſerve, how highly becoming it muſt be to ſerious and devout minds at *certain ſeaſons*, to reflect upon the advantages they have enjoyed in the houſe of God, and how they have improved them.

That this is fitting, I think none will conteſt: ſurely none will diſpute the reaſonableneſs of often reflecting upon the religious priviledges with which they have been favored, and whether they have had the ſuitable effect, and calling to mind whatever hath been beneficial to their ſouls! But are there not certain ſeaſons when theſe duties are peculiarly incumbent on us? Are we not more loudly called upon at *one time* than *another*, and di-

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rected by the hand of providence to turn our minds into a particular channel, or train of thought?

SHOULD not this especially be the case, when we are *deprived* of those *gracious means* we once enjoyed, or are not able through age or infirmity to attend upon them? When David uttered the words of our text, he was prevented from going to the ark of God's presence, but the remembrance of what he had formerly experienced *there* was truly delightful, and he repeatedly expresses it—expresses the pleasure he had in recalling his past advantages. "Those seasons which he had spent in communion with God had been precious to him, and he loved to think them over again."

AND this ought, and will be the desire of the pious and devout, who can no longer go to the house of prayer, and are obliged to spend solitary sabbaths. While it must be distressing to them to be detained from public worship, they will endeavor to have their minds fixed upon divine things, that so they may hope "God will still be with them, and make the house of confinement and affliction, as the house of God and the gate of heaven": and that those words may be applied to *them*, in which God promises his pious people, when dispersed

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in Babylon and mourning the want of public ordinances; "I will be to them as a little ſanctuary in the countries where they ſhall come."*

THIS is alſo highly decent when we leave the houſe of God on the Lord's day, after we have ſpent it in attending upon divine inſtitutions, and are retired to our habitations. With what propriety may we then inquire! What have been our advantages this day? with what temper have we attended? what hath been the ſtate of our minds? what good hath been obtained? what benefit have we received? and what can be more becoming hereupon, than thankfulneſs, humiliation, and reſolution, conformable to the reſult of ſo ſerious, ſo deliberate a review!

AND if this is fitting when we leave the houſe of God for a *ſhort term*, may I not be allowed to ſay, it is *peculiarly* incumbent on us, when we are to leave it *forever*, when we are called in providence to take our *final* farewell of the *place*, where for a *long* courſe of years we have worſhipped our God. Is not then the *preſent* a ſolemn and important ſeaſon; and are there not certain ſentiments and reflections which ſhould poſſeſs our minds in

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* Ezek. xi. 16.

this our *laſt* aſſembling together—our *laſt* approach to God in this *venerable building*?

THE word and ordinances of Chriſt, are to be numbered among our choiceſt bleſſings; they are connected, not only with our preſent peace and happineſs, but with our everlaſting bleſſedneſs. With what *gratitude* to heaven then, ſhould we reflect upon the ſpiritual priviledges we have enjoyed in this place!

HAVE not many of you for a great length of time, here honored and reverenced your God? Have not your children been ſolemnly preſented to the great Author of their exiſtence, and the ſeal of the covenant affixed to them? Have you not frequently poured out your ſouls to your heavenly father for the mercies you needed—the bleſſings you wanted? Hath not Chriſt been evidently ſet forth as crucified before you, and hath not the goſpel of your ſalvation, its important doctrines and precepts been frequently inculcated upon you?

AND may I not aſk, Have not *ſome* found his grace to accompany theſe means, and can they not ſay, "it hath been good for them that they have been here," and that

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they have experienced lasting benefit? And are they not ready to rise up and "call upon their souls to bless their God," and pray, that "they may never forget the benefits" which have been conferred upon them?

And while we reflect with gratitude, should we not be also *humbled* for all our sinful deficiencies, for our inattention and indifference to the divine instructions and applications we have had, for our hardness of heart under the softening and consoling dispensations of grace, under all the faithful admonitions and threatenings from the word of God; that this word hath in the *general* been so unprofitable through *unbelief*, and that it hath obtained no greater *practical* influence.

And to our humiliation should we not also add *resolution*, that we will aim to *retain* any good impressions we may have here felt upon our minds and act agreeably thereto. St. Paul, speaking to the Corinthians of the gospel which he had delivered unto them says, "By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain."* We should then recur to those *truths* which have been

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* 1. Cor. xv. 2.

taught us, together with the *evidences* whereby they have been *ſupported*, that they may abide with us as *fixed* principles of action, "that (as the apoſtle expreſſes it) we henceforth be no more children, toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the ſleight of men, and cunning craftineſs, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."* It is the language of the Pſalmiſt, "I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou haſt quickened me."†

MAY not then one and another of us *now* ſay—"Though this houſe is ſoon to be levelled with the earth, and I am no more to aſſemble in it with my fellow worſhippers, yet it ſhall not be *finally* loſt to me; it ſhall ſtill *remain* as to the happy effects of my attendance here, while I recollect what I have heard and ſeen, and am hereby confirmed in the truth as it is in Jeſus, and find ſacred paſſions, affections and reſolutions enkindled and ſtrengthened in my ſoul."

WITH ſuch a temper then, may we now bid our *laſting farewell* to this temple, where God hath been ſerved in *one* part, for more than ſeventy-ſix years; and in

* Epheſ. iv. 14. † Pſalm cxix. 93.

in *the other* for ſixty-five,* and where he hath employed a ſucceſſion of miniſters ;† who upon the moſt important concerns have addreſſed both *you* and your *fathers*, all of whom (melancholly thought) who were then upon the ſtage, and took an active part in the erection of this building, have long ſince ſlept in the duſt. And we would humbly hope and believe, that *many* ſouls now in *glory*, have been aſſiſted and ſtrengthened in their way thither ; and that there are *others* yet *living*, who in the ſincerity of their hearts can ſay, "here Chriſt hath met me—here he hath bleſſed me."

I SAY

* The houſe was erected in the Autumn of 1724—finiſhed June 1725—dedicated on the 25th of the ſame month—and enlarged in the year 1736.

† The third Church in Newbury, (now, the firſt Church in Newburyport,) was gathered January 12th, 1726, and on the 19th, the Rev. JOHN LOWELL, A. M. was ordained their miniſter.—He died May 15th, 1767, in the 64th year of his age, and 42d of his miniſtry.

Rev. THOMAS CARY was ordained May 11th, 1768, and taken off from his public labors by a paralytic diſorder, March 9th, 1788, being then in the 43d year of his age, and 20th of his miniſtry.

Rev. JOHN ANDREWS was ordained colleague-paſtor December 10th, 1788.

I SAY theſe things, (my friends) not with any deſign of leading you into any ſuperſtitious notion of this public edifice, or that I ſuppoſe there is any *real ſanctity* cleaving to it. No! But my deſign this afternoon, hath been to lead you to GOD—to lead you to *your* God that you might praiſe him, and to your *fathers* God that you might exalt him—to lead you to a *juſt* ſenſe, and a *wiſe* improvement of thoſe important advantages, which for ſo long a period have been here enjoyed.

I MAY not finiſh without obſerving, that according to the ſerious and thoughtful diſpoſition with which you leave the *old-houſe*, you may hope through Chriſt, for an acceptance in the *new-one*. May you be prepared for your entrance into it this week, and for its ſolemn dedication to God. And while I congratulate you, that it hath been built with ſo much unanimity—with ſo much alacrity, peace and love, I pray God, he may "beautify his temple," far beyond thoſe decorations of art, which give it ſo ſplendid an *external* appearance, and which attract our notice, with ſo very ſenſible a pleaſure.

IN a word: May we all bear in mind, that it cannot be *long* as to *any* of us, and *certainly* as to *ſome* of us, that

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we can worſhip in the ſanctuary here below, but bleſſed be our God, "there is an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." *There* may we carry our views, for *that ſtate* may we be ripening. And God of his infinite mercy grant, that we your *miniſters*, and you our *dear people*, may meet at *laſt* in the heavenly manſions, and be of that happy number, who ſhall ſtand at the right hand of Chriſt, and ſpend a bliſsful eternity together.

AMEN.